

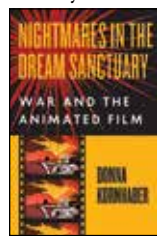
Lee, gives evenhanded treatment to his accomplishments and foibles. —*Gordon Flagg*

### **Nightmares in the Dream Sanctuary: War and the Animated Film.**

By Donna Kornhaber.

Jan. 2020. 328p. illus. Univ. of Chicago, \$35 (9780226472683); e-book, \$21 (9780226472713). 791.43.

In the earliest extant cartoon about war, *Matches Appeal* (circa 1899), a matchstick figure pleads for donations of matches to the Second Boer War effort. By all accounts, it was an audience sensation. The war cartoon really arrived with WWI and burgeoned with antiwar drawings in its aftermath; big series stars, including Felix the Cat and Mickey Mouse, were American favorites,



while homegrown icons appeared in cartoons of other nations. WWII brought pro-war cartoons, now seldom seen unexpurgated because of their racist and ethnic stereotypes. As Kornhaber continues her history, she tracks the disappearance of

pro-war cartoons after the Holocaust and Hiroshima, and notes that the central mission of the preponderance of the cartoons she subsequently discusses is to bear, even comically, serious witness to war. Four substantial chapters consider cartoons of “Resistance” (to war), “Pacifism,” “Memory” (of survivors), and “Memorial” (remembrance of victims). Kornhaber’s close analyses of outstanding examples of each kind are so lucid and persuasive that they actually teach readers how to “read” films and appreciate their formal qualities. Although this is a specialized study, it is extraordinarily engaging, psychologically penetrating, and intellectually absorbing. In short, this is a new classic of topical film studies and the literature of art and war. —*Ray Olson*

### **Rocket Man: The Life of Elton John.**

By Mark Bego.

Jan. 2020. 416p. illus. Pegasus, \$27.95 (9781643133133). 782.42166.

His hits span the decades: “Your Song,” “Daniel,” “Tiny Dancer,” “Goodbye Yellow Brick Road,” “Rocket Man.” With the success of the fantasy-laced 2019 film *Rocketman* and publication of his memoir, more people than ever know his backstory. So does the world need another Elton John biography? So compelling and entertaining is prolific pop music biographer Bego’s portrait that the answer is in the affirmative. Bego writes about young Reginald Dwight’s childhood in the greater London area, where the introverted, chubby, and bespectacled youngster felt like an outcast. Seeing Elvis on television changed everything. Polite Reg reinvented himself as the flamboyant Elton John, and with lyricist and platonic soul mate Bernie Taupin, formed “one of the most successful songwriting teams of the 20th century.”

Bego discusses John’s extensive recording output as well as his drug addiction and various health issues, his failed suicide attempt, his coming out, his forays into musical theater (*Aida*, *The Lion King*, *Billy Elliot*), his marriage to David Furnish, and the making of *Rocketman*, which John’s film company, Rocket Pictures, helped make. Elton fans won’t want to miss this. —*June Sawyers*

### **Ted Shawn: His Life, Writings, and Dances.**

By Paul A. Scolieri.

Dec. 2019. 536p. Oxford, \$39.95 (9780199331062); e-book (9780199331093). 792.8092.

Ted Shawn (1891–1972) is often called the “Father of American Dance” and in this comprehensive biography, Scolieri (*Dancing the New World: Aztecs, Spaniards, and the Choreography of Conquest*, 2013) ably demonstrates why. Denishawn, the first American modern dance company and school, which he and Ruth St. Denis founded, counted among its students Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Charles Weidman. Shawn formed the first all-male dance company, Ted Shawn’s Men Dancers, and founded Jacob’s Pillow, the renowned dance festival and school the *New York Times* calls “the dance center of the nation.” Scolieri writes that “Shawn was also the first prominent American choreographer to publish widely on the subject of dance, writing nine books and hundreds of articles and editorials.” His account of Shawn’s personal life—he married Ruth St. Denis and kept his homosexuality hidden from all but his inner circle of friends—is “a hitherto untold story about the ways that Shawn’s sexual identity informed his principles and practices of dance.” Scolieri has created an impeccably researched, in-depth look at a key modern-dance pioneer. —*Carolyn Mulac*

## Crafts & Hobbies

### **Beginner’s Guide to Tunisian Crochet: With 10 Modern Projects for You and Your Home.**

By Emma Guess.

Nov. 2019. 96p. illus. Search, paper, \$17.95 (9781782216667). 746.434041.

To the untrained, eye, Tunisian crochet looks like knitting, but it’s actually an amalgamation of three needlework arts: crocheting, knitting, and weaving. This rediscovered craft has been gaining supporters (and dedicated collections to fashion) for the past few years. U.K.-based fashion and crafts designer Guess uses her good sense of aesthetics and color to create 10 patterns, from scarves to blankets, that anyone would be delighted to copy. The upfront instructions zero in on five stitches (simple stitch, knit stitch, twisted knit stitch, purl stitch, and full stitch), each with good step-by-step details and a unique feature: 16 combination swatches to show the possibilities, including both the finished swatch and directions. Tips and/or notes are embedded in the designs, along with charts

of Tunisian symbols and color photographs. If black is a favored color, it’ll be difficult to resist building a yarn stash for projects like an ombre basket, two-way bag, or mitre square blanket. No need for beginner’s luck here. —*Barbara Jacobs*

### **Caticorn Crafts: 25 Purr-fectly Enchanted Projects.**

By Crystal Allen.

Dec. 2019. 160p. illus. Skyhorse, paper, \$19.99 (9781510751002); e-book (9781510751026). 745.5.

Allen made a name for herself as the force behind *Hello Creative Family*, a website that specializes in quick and easy crafts and recipes designed to ignite creativity for all ages. *Caticorn Crafts* collects many of the crafts that feature many iterations of the “meow-gical” cat–unicorn hybrid. Each craft is suitable for a beginner, and most include “Pro Crafter Tips,” optional additional steps for more experienced or ambitious creators. She makes the projects easy by providing templates for flowers and caticorn faces, or by using materials with built-in flair, such as sparkly paper. This is especially handy for folks looking for trendy projects like flair pins (which use Shrinky Dinks!) or bath bombs. The fabric projects are all no-sew—an impressive way to make a pillow, a sleep mask, or a caticorn costume. There is plenty of inspiration here for those planning a craft night or a themed party, and all of the projects have a style adjacent to the Japanese kawaii aesthetic. Patrons will find the positivity and cuteness of the caticorn difficult to resist. —*Susan Maguire*

### **Creating Wooden Jewelry: 24 Skill-Building Projects and Techniques.**

By Sarah King.

Dec. 2019. 176p. illus. Fox Chapel, paper, \$19.99 (9781497100015); e-book (9781607657187). 745.51.

Wood jewelry has had a crafts following since the 1970s, when craftspeople in all media were drilling, soldering, cutting, shaping, and otherwise applying a variety of techniques to the art of nature. In her first publishing adventure, U.K.-based designer King attempts it all, combining technical elements of woodworking with more visionary concepts of contemporary design. It works, somewhat. Without a doubt, the 24 pieces are inspiring; an ebony silver dot pendant and an oak strata necklace, just to name two. Each project homes in on the how-to’s, with excellent step-by-step, up-close captioned color photographs, detailed lists of materials needed, and sidebars on using a piercing saw (keep the blade taut), among others. More information about working with the equipment and the complex tools would have been helpful. On the other hand, interviews and mini-art galleries from four European designers, each of whom excels imaginatively and technically, are an added value. Combine this with a beginner’s woodworking course for best success. End materials include bibliography, useful information, and selected jewelers using wood. —*Barbara Jacobs*

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.